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May, 1980

Number 5

Picnic and Endangered Condor Program

The fifth annual May picnic dinner and general membership meeting on Thursday, May 8, sponsored by the Conservation Committee, will feature nature walks, some great films on endangered wildlife — including a rare old short on the condor — and a briefing on the condor recovery plan.

“Guided by the Nene” tells the success story of this rare Hawaiian goose, brought back from virtual extinction by domestic propagation to the islands’ wilds. “Vanishing Birds” views an endangered species closer to home. The California Condor is shown through excellent slow motion photography and rare scenes. The ecology of the region and the reasons why the condor is severely threatened are clearly shown. National Audubon representative and condor expert John Borneman will present the controversial condor recovery plan which now calls for the eventual trapping of all birds in the wild and then answer questions from the audience.

Bring your family, friends and a picnic dinner to the redwood tables and grills on the spacious lawn near Tilden Park’s Nature Center. Wildflower and birding walks with interpretive leaders are planned for 6:30 p.m., ending in time for the 7:30 program in the Nature Center.

To get to the Tilden Park Nature Center from north Berkeley, drive up Spruce St. until you reach the intersection of Grizzly Peak Blvd. and Spruce. Cross Grizzly Peak Blvd. and immediately turn left downhill on Cañon Dr. At the bottom of the hill turn left again to reach the Nature Center.

—CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Field Trips Calendar

Saturday, May 3—San Francisco's north coast. Meet at **8 a.m.** at the Palace of the Legion of Honor parking lot (Lincoln Park). From Geary St., go north (toward the bay) on 34th Ave. to the top of the hill (through the golf course) and park in the large circular lot to the east (right). Bring lunch and hiking boots. We will hike some fairly steep hills as we search for migrants along Land's End. We should see many species common to the coast. After lunch we will caravan to the Presidio to look for Hooded Orioles. Leaders: Alan Hopkins and Donna Lion (668-4840).

Sunday, May 4—Putah Creek. See April *Gull* for details.

Saturday, May 10—Briones Regional Park. Meet at **8 a.m.** at the second parking lot at the Bear Creek Rd. entrance. From Hwy. 24 take the Orinda exit and turn left onto Camino Pablo. Go north for about 2 miles to Bear Creek Rd. (Briones Park sign), turn right and drive 4 miles east to the park entrance. Carry lunch and liquids for a 4-mile hike. The terrain is somewhat hilly. We should see many of the common summering birds of the interior areas of the East Bay. Leader: Peter White (229-1714). (✓)

Sunday, May 11—Wildcat Canyon Regional Park. Meet at **8 a.m.** at Arlington Park at Arlington Ave. and Brewster Dr. in El Cerrito. From there we will drive to the starting point. Pack lunch and liquids for a 6-mile hike. Boots are advisable. We will encounter some hills as we walk a transect of the canyon to bird in brushlands, oak woodlands, riparian streamsides and grasslands. We anticipate seeing a good representation of nesting and migrating birds of the East Bay. Leader: Malcolm Sproul (841-3086).

Saturday, May 17—Mt. St. Helena. Meet at **8 a.m.** at the junction of Ida Clayton Rd. and Hwy. 128, 6.3 miles north of Calistoga. Bring lunch and liquids. Carpool if at all possible because parking is limited and we must caravan to bird the road. Leader: Mike Parmeter (707-255-6757). (✓)

Sunday, May 18—Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve. In this trip we will explore this unusual area for birds during the morning hours and step back into its past by walking through the mine and

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archeological digs after lunch. From Hwy. 24 go north to Hwy. 4 and go east to the Somersville Rd. exit (Antioch). Follow the Somersville Rd. south to the park entrance where we will meet at **8 a.m.** We should see an excellent variety of birds common to the drier interior areas. Following a leisurely lunch, we will tour Black Diamond Mine and the archeological digs of an abandoned mining town (about 1 mile of walking in all). If you wish to tour the mine please contact Joan Cohn by May 12 so arrangements can be made (there is an additional fee). Be sure to bring plenty of liquids because local water supplies are limited. Boots are advisable because of the rough terrain and the slim possibility of encountering a rattlesnake. Leaders: Joan Cohn (524-4583), Dave Cornman (825-2106). (✓)

Monday, May 26—Mt. Diablo State Park. Meet at **9 a.m.** at the Rock City parking area. From Oakland go east on I-580, then north on I-680 to Danville and follow the signs east on Diablo Rd. to the park. The first available parking is at Rock City, about 1 mile inside the south entrance station gate. Bring lunch and liquids. Be prepared to walk about a mile to the most productive birding area of the South Gate Rd. Leader: Mary Louise Rosegay (386-1640). (✓)

Friday, May 30 - Sunday, June 1—Birding by car in Yosemite. The lower elevations of Yosemite National Park are full of song in late May. Among many others we will listen to 7 species of flycatchers (including 4 *Empidonax*), 3 vireos, 7 warblers and 3 "red" finches. Our activities will depend on weather and snow conditions. Bring warm clothing, pack a lunch and plan on walking about 6 miles. We have reservations for campers at the Foresta group camp. The nearest motels are all 20 miles or more from the meeting places. If approaching from Merced try the small town of El Portal for reservations (Yosemite View Lodge, 209-379-2681). On the north side try the Sugar Pine Ranch Motel near Groveland along Hwy. 120 (209-962-7823).

On **Friday, May 30**, meet at Big Meadow at **3 p.m.** and on **Saturday, May 1**, at **8 a.m.** (we will bird here until at least 10 a.m.). To reach the meeting place take an unsigned paved road just north of the tunnels on the Big Oak Flat Rd. Big Meadows is about 6 miles down this road on your right, across from the settlement of Foresta (marked on park maps). On Friday we will also meet at the Big Oak Flat entrance station (Hwy. 120) at 7 p.m. for evening birds and owls and again at 10 p.m. to pick up night drivers on the way back to the group camp. *Get a map to orient yourself* and call our transportation coordinator for carpooling.

Leaders: Marie Mans (284-7681) and Dave Cornman (825-2106).
(✓)

Saturday, June 7—Kirby Cove (Marin Headlands). Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the east end of the tunnel in Ft. Baker just west of Alexander Ave. From Hwy. 101 take the Alexander Ave. exit (just north of the Golden Gate Bridge) and go toward Sausalito. Turn left toward Rodeo Lagoon and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Meet in front of the tunnel. Bring a lunch and liquids for a moderate hike of about 2 miles. In addition to the excellent view, we should see summer residents and a few migrants common to the coast. Leader: Alan Hopkins (668-4840).

Summer Trips to the Mountains

June 14, 15—Yuba Pass - Peter Allen (981-7199)

June 20-22—Lassen Volcanic National Park - Dan Murphy (564-0074)

June 27-29—Mono Basin - Tony Briggs (282-3142)

August 8-10—Yosemite National Park - George Peyton (444-3131)

August 16,17—Mt. Piños - Eben McMillan (Call Dan Murphy for information)

We need leaders for local summer trips. We anticipate only three such trips. If you are experienced in birding a productive area during the summer and would like to share your experience with others, please call Dan Murphy (564-0074) before May 31.

Problems: If for any reason you have a problem getting in touch with a field trip leader and need information regarding a trip, call Dan Murphy (564-0074) or the GGAS office (843-2222).

Carpooling: Carpooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). If you need a ride or are offering one, call Kate Partridge at work (642-6881, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.) or at home before 9 p.m. (548-0779). All expenses, including gas and incidental fees, are shared by riders. It is best for all involved to plan these arrangements with the driver at the outset of the trip.

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

March Observations – Through March 25

BIRDS CONTINUING INTO MARCH

Yellow-billed Loon: Point Richmond to March 8 (mob, DJ, JZ). Tufted Duck: male at Mill Valley to March 22 (mob, BB, GMcC). Oldsquaw: Berkeley Pier to March 25 (VD, GH). American Golden Plover: up to eight near Spaletta Ranch to March 8 (BA). Rock Sandpiper: at Bodega Head, four to March 9 (JM), two to March 18 (JR). **Black-headed Gull** and **Little Gull**: single adults at Stockton Sewage Ponds to March 24 (JM, GMcC, EC, DP). Yellow Warbler: Walton Square, San Francisco, through March 24 (DE). **Great-tailed Grackle**: Walton Square through ca. March 19 (DE). Rose-breasted Grosbeak: immature male in Kensington, but in a different yard, to March 4 (CL, HG).

WEBFEET

Three highlights of the March 8 Davidson Seamount pelagic trip were a like number of Laysan Albatross. As in some past years, March winds brought pelagics to land on the Monterey Peninsula. From Otters Point, Pacific Grove, on March 25 eight Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels, eight Ashy Storm-Petrels and many Northern Fulmars and Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen (DR). Many people have reported the two or three American Flamingos on the salt ponds near the Dumbarton Bridge (CS, *et al.*). Most rare southern waders in California are assumed to be wild, but the nearest Pacific population of flamingos is a few hundred on the Galapagos Islands! Two more Harlequin Duck sites were Fan Shell Beach, Monterey Peninsula, March 1 or 2 (SH) and Santa Cruz March 4-24 (SG). Santa Cruz also had an Oldsquaw March 9 (SG) and another was at the Fish Docks March 8 (BA).

A Glaucous Gull at Younger Lagoon, Santa Cruz, through March 24 (SG) may be our last of this winter. Clifton Court Forebay, at the southwest corner of the San Joaquin Delta, seems to be a vagrant trap for salt water birds. Following a second-winter **Western Gull** there in late 1979, a first-winter **Western Gull** was found February 29 (both BR). A Franklin's Gull visited Fan Shell Beach March 1 or 2 (SH). Three Heermann's Gulls (first-winter) at Sausalito March 23 (DG) in a rather large concentration for within the Bay at this time. The Davidson Seamount pelagic trip March 8 found two Xantus' Murrelets, but the exciting alcid was a **Horned Puffin** (GMcC, *et al.*).

EARLY BIRDS

Of the many species returning early this spring (JM, *et al.*), most are landbirds but the shorebirds are the most spectacular examples. The **Solitary Sandpiper** that visited Isabel Pond, Livermore, on March 8

(AE, PW) was well over a month early. Closer to schedule, but still very rare in spring, was the **Baird's Sandpiper** at Lodi Sewage Ponds March 24 (GMcC, JM, DP, EC). Probably most of our spring Baird's stop at such interior sites. Five American Golden Plovers accompanied many Black-bellied Plovers at Lodi Sewage Ponds March 23 (RA, WK). Although almost all our spring Goldens have been coastal, perhaps interior records will be more frequent now that birders are learning to love sewage ponds.

Quite early was the small flock of Vaux' Swifts seen at Pescadero March 23-24 (KH, *et al.*). A male Costa's Hummingbird was heard singing Jan. 20 and 23 and seen Feb. 20 in Alamo (JR).

PREDATOR, 'PECKER, AND PASSERINES

Kennedy Grove, El Sobrante, hosted immature and adult Red-shouldered Hawks Feb. 29-March 3 (SA). This species is seldom seen in the East Bay. The Pileated Woodpecker near Calaveras Reservoir March 9 (DS, JRo) was similarly away from its usual haunts.

One wonders if the Eastern Phoebe that spent March at least through the 24th in Santa Cruz (SG) spent all winter in the area or migrated from some other area of vagrancy. Similar questions could be asked of the following three species. Although the Sage Thrasher on Bay Farm Island was independently discovered twice on March 16 (DRi; JG, LF, *et al.*), I think it likely that this inconspicuous bird was in the area much earlier. In 1970 one was seen in Alameda Jan. 6, 7, 15 and Feb. 5 (ER, *et al.*). This year's Sage Thrasher is still present. Palm Warblers were found at Neary's Lagoon (March 15 or 16 - SG) and Natural Bridges State Park, Santa Cruz (March 24 - SG), barely a mile apart. From this knowledge, these may have been the same individual or both or neither might have wintered in those places. Was the Nashville Warbler that was near the Sage Thrasher March 17-19 (JL, DE) a very early migrant or a winterer? Another Nashville Warbler stayed at Middle Lake, Golden Gate Park, through March 1 (DM, *et al.*) and a female Western Tanager favored Walnut Creek from December through March 3 (WO, JR). The locally unpredictable Lark Bunting appeared at the Estero Trailhead, Point Reyes, March 1 (FB). Another erratic species, Evening Grosbeak, continued its Bay Area presence: five at Five Brooks March 15 (DR), 13 at Neary's Lagoon March 15 or 16 (SG) and four to six in Tilden Park March 22 (JM). These groups pale in comparison to the many thousands seen flying southwest past Eagle Lake, Lassen County, March 16 (DL, DJ, *et al.*)! Will this irruption reach our area?

Observers: Steve Abbors, Ray Acker, Beverly Anderson, Bruce Barrett, Florence Bennett, Elizabeth Copper, Vickie Dziadosz, Art Edwards, Dick Erickson, Leora Feeney, Steve Getty, Doug Gomke, Helen Green, Jeff Greenhouse, Kem Hainebach, Sidney Harrison, Larry Hartsough, George Hugenberg, Dick Johnson, Wilma Kang, Donna Lion, John Luther, Connie Lynch, Guy McCaskie, many observers (mob), Joe Morlan, Dan Murphy, Winnie Orcutt, Dennis Parker, David Rice (DRi), Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond (JR), Don Roberson (DR), Elsie Roemer, Jim Rosso (JRo), Don Schmoldt, Chris Swarth, Peter Willmann, Jon Zablackis.

—STEPHEN F. BAILEY, *Observations Editor*
Museum of Vertebrate Zoology

University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720
(phone 548-9507); or Karen L. Bailey at 642-3327 8 a.m.-noon, 1-5 p.m.)

From the Board

We welcome Bruce Howard as First Vice President of Golden Gate Audubon Society. Bruce is well qualified to assist us as an officer of the chapter. He is currently on the board of Audubon Canyon Ranch, Chairman of the Board of the Oakland Museum, Chairman of the Board of Children's Hospital and a member of several other boards of civic and environmental organizations in the Bay Area. His leadership abilities and commitment to the Audubon cause will be great assets to our chapter. With his extremely busy schedule we are indeed fortunate to have him join us.

Board positions open up from time to time for various reasons. If you are interested in a leadership role please contact Lenore Johnsen, chairperson of the Nominating Committee. Your time and support are also appreciated on our committees. See the last page of *The Gull* for the appropriate chairperson to contact if you wish to serve on a committee.

We are involved in the arduous process of revising our constitution. An ad hoc committee consisting of Bob Hirt, Lenore Johnsen, Dan Murphy and Doug Gomke has been selected to accomplish this task. The committee will submit its product to the Board for approval prior to having the chapter vote on its implementation.

Our membership drive has produced some positive results. We welcome the 232 new members who joined in January and February of 1980. As of the end of February, GGAS, the nation's largest chapter, had increased its membership strength to 6,381.

Congratulations to Jerry Emory and Dick Kaufman on their selection

to receive the chapter's scholarships to Audubon Camp of the West to be held in Wyoming in August.

Some significant board resolutions recently passed include the following:

National Audubon Society's Condor Program. Although GGAS supports the stated purpose of the program, i.e., saving the California Condor from extinction, we do not support the program as it is presently constituted and understood.

We resolved as a board to express our concern with the direction, focus and procedures in a detailed letter to National Audubon. A copy of this letter is available at the office for those who are interested in our specific concerns. The position paper we are currently working on will be published in full in next month's *Gull*.

Basically, our opposition cites inadequate public education, inattention to habitat preservation and expansion, incomplete scientific assurance of the birds' safety in the capture process and disagreement as to the program's premature inclusion of captive propagation.

We welcome all members' comments on this controversial subject. We feel that the death of *any* California Condor (total population is estimated to be between 20 and 30 birds) as a result of our efforts to save it would not only jeopardize the condor's present status but would seriously impede our society's efforts in other areas of conservation and environmental protection.

Somewhat less controversial resolutions passed by the board are our agreements to support conservation efforts in the Corte Madera marsh (Marin County) which contains Black Rail habitat and in Wildcat Canyon (Contra Costa County) where a citizens' group has organized to urge the East Bay Regional Park District to buy the Taylor/McCosker properties rather than see them given over to condominiums.

We also support the Environmental Bill of Rights and commend the efforts of Peter Behr and David Brower to place this constitutional amendment on the November ballot.

We are sponsoring interpretive signs to inform the public of the wild birds at the Palace of Fine Arts and Exploratorium in San Francisco. Any funds you are willing to donate to help defray the expense of this effort or of our Least Tern Study project at Alameda Naval Air Station will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged in *The Gull*.

—BOB HIRT, *President*

*An Invitation to
Golden Gate
Audubon Society's
Annual Dinner*



Saturday, June 14, 1980

San Francisco is the location for this year's Annual Dinner, to be held on **Saturday, June 14**, at the Great Electric Underground in the Bank of America Building in the financial district. The Great Electric Underground is administered by the same people who manage the famed Carnelian Room on the 52nd floor.

We are happy to have Peter Behr as our honored guest speaker this year. Former State Senator Behr, who had an impressive conservation voting record while in the State Senate, is the co-author and principal draftsman of the Environmental Bill of Rights.

Added attractions will be the showing of National Audubon Society's film, "Time for Survival," and a display of the outstanding art of Pedro J. Gonzalez, who has once again agreed to do the illustrations for our next Birders' Calendar and Almanac which will be available later this year.

Please respond promptly as space is limited. Make checks payable to the **Golden Gate Audubon Society** and mail them to the GGAS office at 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, CA 94705, with the coupon below. Tickets will not be sent — your confirmation will be checked off a list by the door.

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER

Saturday, June 14, 1980, 6:30 p.m.

at the

Great Electric Underground

555 California Street, San Francisco

Enclosed is my check for..... for dinners at \$12.50

Name.....Phone.....

Address.....

Winners All

To keep our membership drive flying along, GGAS has a few more offers you can't refuse! Each member who brings in four new paid members will receive a \$15 gift certificate to The Nature Company or North Face. In addition to this exciting offer, the person who brings in the most new paid members for the month of May will receive an *additional* \$50 gift certificate to The Nature Company!

The Nature Company and North Face both have stores in Berkeley, San Francisco and Palo Alto. The Nature Company has a wide-ranging inventory which includes optical equipment, wildlife prints and posters and countless other items to help you enjoy and learn more about the natural world. Its bookstore contains thousands of volumes. North Face is a premier outdoor clothing and equipment store which manufactures much of its merchandise. The quality is outstanding and eminently practical.

Those who nominate one to three new members will receive a beautiful nature map, "Audubon's America," published by National Audubon Society. New members will also receive copies.

Take advantage of these generous offers and bring in those new members. They will help us secure our status as the largest chapter in the U.S. and *you* may be the winner of the grand prize!

—GGAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Please enroll for GGAS and National Audubon membership

Name.....

Address.....

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*See back of *Gull* for membership rates

Please enroll for GGAS and National Audubon membership

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Conservation Notes

OIL SUPERTANKERS IN MONTEREY BAY? PG&E has announced plans to expand its mooring facilities in Monterey Bay to accommodate 90,000-ton supertankers to fuel the oil-fired power plant at Moss Landing. The giant utility claims larger tankers and fewer deliveries will diminish the risk of oil spills, but opposing groups say 90,000-ton ships are much less maneuverable than the 50,000-ton vessels now used and that just one accident with a large tanker could be a major disaster.

There are now no American registered tankers in the 90,000-ton class and the safety records of foreign tankers are poor. Monterey Bay is a rich marine and wildlife habitat and supports a thriving fishing industry. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service are now assessing the impact of the proposed project on endangered species, with special emphasis on the sea otter and Brown Pelican. Based on their reports, the Army Corps of Engineers will grant or deny a permit to PG&E for use of the supertankers.

CALIFORNIA WINS RARE II LAWSUIT. The state of California has won its lawsuit against the U.S. Forest Service for designating as "non-wilderness" 47 areas the state requested be placed in "wilderness" or "further planning" status. Agreeing with the state that one environmental statement for the entire RARE II program was inadequate for the thousands of acres under consideration, the court decision will now prohibit development of the 47 particular areas until site-specific environmental impact statements are written.

The court also questioned the Forest Service's analysis of public opinion and the rating system used to determine wilderness qualities of roadless areas, thus casting doubt on the entire process.

In Congress, wilderness bills for California — many sponsored by Representative Phillip Burton — are now being drafted using information from last year's hearings rather than from RARE II reports. House action on the California bills is expected during the next few months.

MONO LAKE BILL IN STATE HOUSE. The fight to save Mono Lake has moved to the state legislature with the introduction of a bill to implement the plan of the joint federal-state task force. AB 2235, authored by Norm Waters (D-Plymouth), calls for restoration of the lake to its 1970 elevation of 6,388 feet, 15 feet above its present level. Diversions would be cut by 85 percent and a modest water conservation

and waste water recycling program would be established to make up for temporary shortfalls. The plan would save water and energy and allow the lake to live. It would cost the average Los Angeles resident only 54 cents per year.

AMERICA'S TEN MOST ENDANGERED. U.S. Fish and Wildlife has released the current list of the ten most endangered species in North America. First is the black-footed ferret, followed by the red wolf, snail darter, birdwing pearly mussel, lotic blue butterfly, Dusky Seaside Sparrow, Kauai oo, Houston toad, Kemps Ridley sea turtle and the only plant on the list, the clay-loving phacelia. "Endangered species" is the theme of this month's GGAS membership meeting at Tilden Nature Center. See page 73 for details.

Birding East and West of Yuba Pass

An opportunity for very good birding in June is offered by the Yuba Pass area of the northern Sierra at the source of the Yuba River. This is less rugged country than the central Sierra. The mountain peaks and passes lower in elevation as they approach the termination of the Sierra Nevada proper at Fredonyer Pass only 60 air miles to the north. It is a different Sierra, but beautiful in its own way and rich in plant and animal life.

West of the pass, always within hearing distance of the river, there are meadows, aspen thickets, some mountain chaparral and forests consisting of red fir in the higher reaches gradually making the transition to white fir as the elevation lowers. The red fir forest is interspersed with lodgepole and an occasional Jeffrey pine. Among the white firs there are cottonwoods and a few sugar pines. Quaking aspen and mountain alder follow the river and some of its many side streams.

After a day spent in this mountain habitat it is interesting to travel east of the pass, descending gradually into the large Sierra Valley where a network of small streams gathers at the northwest end, giving rise to the Feather River. When the gently sloping valley floor is reached, birds will be found typical of sagebrush country with the added bonus of many wet land species.

These two areas west and east of Yuba Pass afford a sharp contrast in the varying needs of the birds found in each. There is also an interesting area in the eastern foothills below the pass where the mountain habitat and the sage country blend where the incomparable song of the Hermit Thrush and, with luck, the trilling voice of the Poor-will can be heard at the same time.

A good place to begin the exploration of the west side is in Wild Plum Canyon off Highway 49 on the outskirts of the old mining town of Sierra City. (There are motels and restaurants here.) Haypress Creek flows from the east into the North Yuba River at this point. After crossing a bridge over the river the road passes through an extensive area of oak and chaparral where there are Black-throated Gray Warblers and Lazuli Buntings, birds which are not often seen higher up. Drive on to the Forest Service's Wild Plum Campground. The Dipper can be seen to advantage from the bridge which spans Haypress Creek. There is plenty of parking here and good birding opportunities.

Returning to Highway 49, which acts as the main street of Sierra City, continue up it to Bassett's Station where there is an interesting turnoff. Turn left onto the Gold Lake Road. At the top of the first grade turn left again over a bridge and continue to Sardine Lake. Across the lake are the spectacular Sierra Buttes which are the second highest point in Sierra County at 8587 feet. The snow masses which remain on this butte during most of the summer feed a series of lakes to the east of the mountain, Sardine Lake being the lowest of these. Around the lake there are Yellow, Yellow-rumped and MacGillivray's Warblers and Green-tailed Towhees among other species.

Return to the Gold Lake Road and continue up it to Gold Lake. (It is about ten miles from Bassett's Station to Gold Lake.) Turn off to the left at the Gold Lake side road and drive about 500 feet to the lake's edge. From the parking place here families of Common Mergansers are sometimes seen. For the best sightings one should reach the lake before 9 a.m. as wind usually rises at this time, making it too rough for the ducks to come in close to shore. If the lake is smooth and there are not too many people about, the female and young will come into the pool beside the parking area at the lake's outlet into Frazier Creek. This is also a good place to look for the Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker. The best chance of seeing one is along the dirt road which runs from the parking place along the right side of the lake and then up the hill for a distance.

Return down the Gold Lake Road to Highway 49. As one proceeds east on the highway above Bassett's Station the white fir forest becomes more dense and lodgepole pines more frequent. There are occasional cottonwood trees and small groves of aspen. The North Yuba River which now flows close to the right hand side of the road is almost lost in a tangle of interlocking mountain alder. Dippers and Wilson's Warblers can be found here. A rewarding stop is just ahead at the Forest Service's Chapman Creek Campground. If you are a camper this is a

good place to make an overnight stop. The campground area and its adjoining forest and riparian habitat along Chapman Creek make for excellent early morning birding — by ear as well as by sight.

Continuing on up Highway 49, the next good stop is Clark Station Summer Homesites, about two and one-half miles distant and easily recognized as there is a small meadow sloping down to the river on the right side of the road. On the left side there is a row of mail boxes and a dirt road which takes off up the mountain. This road is not passable until the snow has melted and should even then be driven with care. Better still, walk up it and listen for Warbling Vireo and Olive-sided Flycatcher. Bear to the left at the first branching of the road and continue a short distance into a mountain chaparral area. A component of this chaparral is *Ribes*, which consists here of both currant and gooseberry, the blossoms of which attract Calliope Hummingbirds. Watch for the males who perch on the topmost twigs of the bushes. Keep the sun at your back so the purple-lavender rays of his gorget can be fully appreciated. This is a good place to look for Dusky Flycatcher, the sight or sound of a Pilcated Woodpecker, Fox Sparrow, MacGillivray's and Nashville Warbler and Green-tailed Towhee.

The forested parts of Clark Station consist of red and white fir, lodgepole pine and a few fine old Jeffrey pines. In these areas there are White-headed Woodpecker, Mountain Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Warbler, Western Tanager, Dark-eyed Junco, Lincoln Sparrow (in the small wet meadows) and, with good fortune, many others including Mountain Quail and Pygmy Owl.

Along the North Yuba River at Clark Station nesting Willow Flycatchers and Williamson's Sapsuckers have been found. Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers nest regularly in the lodgepole woods on the far side of the river. Listen for their call, a sharp *plik* or *kik*, while walking through the woods.

The next stop should be Yuba Pass itself, but there is good birding all along the river and many likely turnouts. Always be on the lookout for logging trucks which usually do not become a problem until later in the summer. Yuba Pass is the highest point on Highway 49 at an elevation of 6701 feet. The pass consists of a wet meadow which slopes gently south and west, its drainage forming the headwaters of the North Yuba River. The meadow is surrounded by a pure stand of red fir and is dotted with aspen and clumps of willow. Wildflowers abound. In spring the first sound heard by the birder is the *kyork* of the Mountain Quail. The call is repeated at intervals and comes from the forested and

rocky edge of the upper part of the meadow. There is a Forest Service campground at the summit, but after a winter of heavy snow it is not often open before July.

The largest group of aspen are located at the upper end of the meadow beside Highway 49 and at the lower end where the ground becomes very wet. These groups of aspen afford nesting places for a variety of birds, many of which make their homes in old woodpecker holes. These inviting abodes were made originally by White-headed, Hairy and Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers who, incidentally, continue to frequent the area and now provide nesting sites for House Wrens, Tree Swallows and Mountain Bluebirds. Along the road there may be a pair of Pine Grosbeaks and almost certainly Evening Grosbeaks and Cassin's Finches. These three species seem to be attracted to the seed or insects which catch in gravel along the highway at the east end of the pass. In the willows north of the road there is often a pair of Chipping Sparrows and sometimes White-crowned Sparrows.

If you wish to explore the pass area further, drive south toward Weber Lake on the good dirt logging road which crosses the highway at the summit. Along this road, not far from the highway, there is some fine Townsend's Solitaire habitat.

If there is time and gasoline for more good birding, drive east of the pass down the mountain on Highway 49. The fir forest of the summit is gradually replaced by sugar pine, incense cedar and various species of ceanothus and manzanita. The pines surrounding the valley floor are ponderosa. Turn right at the first junction to the crossroads village of Sattley. Watch the meadows in the vicinity of the village for Common Nighthawks which forage over the wet places in the morning and evening. At Sattley turn onto county road A23. Traveling north, A23 passes first through meadowland and then out into the sage and antelope brush country. Soon after reaching the latter stop at a point where there is a fence on the right-hand side of the road but none on the left. Park and walk out into the unfenced area. Horned Larks, Black-billed Magpies and Savannah, Vesper and Brewer's Sparrows can be found here. With time, patience and a scope, this can prove to be an interesting and productive place. There may even be a pair of Sage Thrashers.

Proceed north on A23 for approximately five or six miles watching closely for a well traveled gravel road turning off at 45 degrees to the right. Half a day or more can be spent to advantage along this side road which connects A23 with A24 and passes through a habitat consisting of ponds, slow moving streams and marshy fields with growths of cat-tails and bulrushes. According to their requirements, this is the nesting

and foraging place of American Bittern, ducks, American Coot, Common Snipe (if you stop and listen you can hear them winnowing), Willet (singing!), American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt (hard to see), Black Tern, Barn and Cliff Swallow, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Yellow-headed Blackbird and other species. Scan the meadows with a scope, particularly to the south where Canada Geese and Sandhill Cranes are often found. Golden Eagles are sometimes seen over this valley; Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels are common. A Swainson's Hawk is an exciting find.

Continue on the gravel road. It will cross the Feather River on an ancient iron bridge. Beyond it are a number of large ponds which are worth investigating. After passing the ponds and several ranch buildings the gravel road ends at the intersection with A24. It is well to turn back here and discover what has been missed on the outbound trip. There is certain to be something of interest, perhaps a Wilson's Phalarope or a Virginia Rail.

Having reached A23 again one can turn north (right) and soon be on Interstate 70 or south (left) to travel back to Sattley where a turn left onto Highway 89 (at this point Highway 89 and Highway 49 coincide) will take you to Interstate 80 at Truckee.

—BETH SNYDER

Costa Rica Tour Rescheduled for July, 1980

Because April proved to be an inconvenient month for many people interested in the GGAS Costa Rica tour, we have rescheduled it for 5-19 July 1980. Also as a three-week trip was too long a vacation for most, we have condensed the original 21-day itinerary into 15 days that will include almost all birding sites. The total price of \$1375 includes all air and ground transportation, accommodations, meals and leadership.

Call Dr. Stephen F. Bailey (548-9507) for information.

Asilomar, 1980

The Western Regional conference of the National Audubon Society held at Asilomar March 29-April 1 was a huge success. We wish to thank those 25 GGAS members who attended. We received information about energy conservation and alternatives and the ecology of the Great Basin. There were also valuable chapter workshops. Congratulations to Dr. Richard Martyr, our Western Regional representative, for his efforts in producing another excellent conference.

Reminder of May Birding Classes

The GGAS-sponsored ornithology classes at Albany Adult School begin in mid-May. They are Avian Biology (topic — breeding and parental behavior) and Spring Vagrant Landbirds. See the April *Gull* for details.

May Cooper Society Meeting in Berkeley

At the May 12 meeting of the Cooper Society, Dr. Robert Bowman of San Francisco State University will discuss the ecology of bird song. The meeting will be held in room 2503 of the Life Sciences Building on the UC campus at 8 p.m. A business meeting starting at 7:30 p.m. precedes each seminar.

The Fabric of Nature

Due to space limitations I could not run Brian McCaffery's column, *The Fabric of Nature*, this month. It will be published as usual next month.

—NANCY CONZETT, *Editor*

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

***The Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month.**